

CONGRESSMAN SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY)
OPENING STATEMENT FOR MARK-UP ON H. RES. 515
November 9, 2005

I want to welcome everyone to what I hope will be a brief mark-up of what I see as a frivolous resolution on a serious subject, global climate change. I wish we did not have to take time on this resolution, but under the rules of the House, Committees must act on resolutions of inquiry within 14 days or they can be brought up under a privileged motion on the House floor. And I certainly don't want to be responsible for the whole House having to devote time to this measure.

I want to make clear at the outset that any debate or vote on this measure should not be seen as any kind of barometer of what the House thinks, or is willing to do about, global climate change. Personally, I support mandatory caps on carbon dioxide, and I think there is growing concern about climate change around the country.

But I don't think that this resolution would advance the debate on climate change one iota. Rather, this resolution is a broadly drafted, partisan political ploy that tries to create a phony issue about documents. I don't see how that helps anyone.

It's difficult even to determine how anyone would comply with the resolution. What documents are being sought? Every Administration document related to climate change and U.S. coasts? How many truckloads of materials would that be?

Moreover, what would we do with this information if we got it? What would we find? What new insight would we arrive at concerning climate change or climate policy? The resolution reminds me about the old line about dogs chasing cars: What would they do if they caught one? What would anyone do if this resolution succeeded?

The more I've read this short resolution, the more baffling I've found it. Information on the potential impact of climate change on U.S. coasts is readily available. The potential impacts of climate change on coastal areas are the subject of countless scientific papers.

So what prompted this? Has anyone sought specific documents for specific reasons under standard procedures and been denied? Not that we know of.

But then again, there's not much that we know of related to this resolution because it was introduced without any discussion with me, even though, under House rules, it has to move swiftly. This is not the way things work around here if one wants to solve a problem rather than try to score a political point.

By now, I assume no one has any doubts about where I stand on this matter. I urge my colleagues to swiftly defeat this resolution so this Committee can return to more worthy business – including looking further into climate change. I should add that we hope to have a subcommittee hearing in the next month on the Administration's draft Climate Change Technology Program plan.

So we will continue to work on this important issue – unimpeded, I hope, by political gamesmanship.

Mr. Gordon.